Consumers' Cooperative Stores

2077. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of consumers cooperative stores in the country state-wise, at the end of December, 1986;

(b) the profits or losses which occurred to these stores during the last two years; and

(c) the details of the steps being taken by Government to encourage consumers' movement?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) The information is being collected from the State Governments and U.T. Administrations and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) With a view to encourage the cooperative organisations of consumers, Government of India, under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the development of consumers cooperatives in urban areas, provides financial assistance through State Governments/U.T. Administrations to enable them to supply consumer goods to the public at reasonable rates, in the rural areas, the primary agricultural credit societies are provided margin money assistance, under another Centrally Sponsored Scheme, to enable them to raise adequate working capital for undertaking distribution of consumer articles.

Further, "concern for consumer" is included in Item No. 18 of the 20-Point Programme-1986. The policy of the Government is to promote a broad-based, responsible and responsive voluntary consumer movement throughout the country. Various measures taken by the Central Govt. for this purpose inculde enactment of a comprehensive legislation called the Consumers' protection Act, 1986, holding of national level and state level seminars workshops, distribution of literature on consumer protection; use of TV/AIR and other media for creating consumer awareness in both urban and rural areas; coordination with the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, etc. Moreover, rights have been conferred in the Consumer Protection Act as well as in other important laws such as Essential commodities Act, Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, Standards of Weights and Measures Act, etc. to the consumers and consumer organisations to file complaints in the courts.

Decision of the Recommendation of the Mandal Commission

2078. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 1696 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st November, 1986 and state:

(a) whether Government have since taken any decision on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) if not, by when Government are likely to take a decision in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No definite time-limit can be indicated. The Government of India, however, continue to be of the opinion that on the question of reservation for backward classes *status quo* should be maintained until a consensus is arrived at.